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LAND USE SURVEY & ANALYSIS

POPULATION & ECONOMY STUDY

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN



LAKE WACCAMAW, NORTH CAROLINA



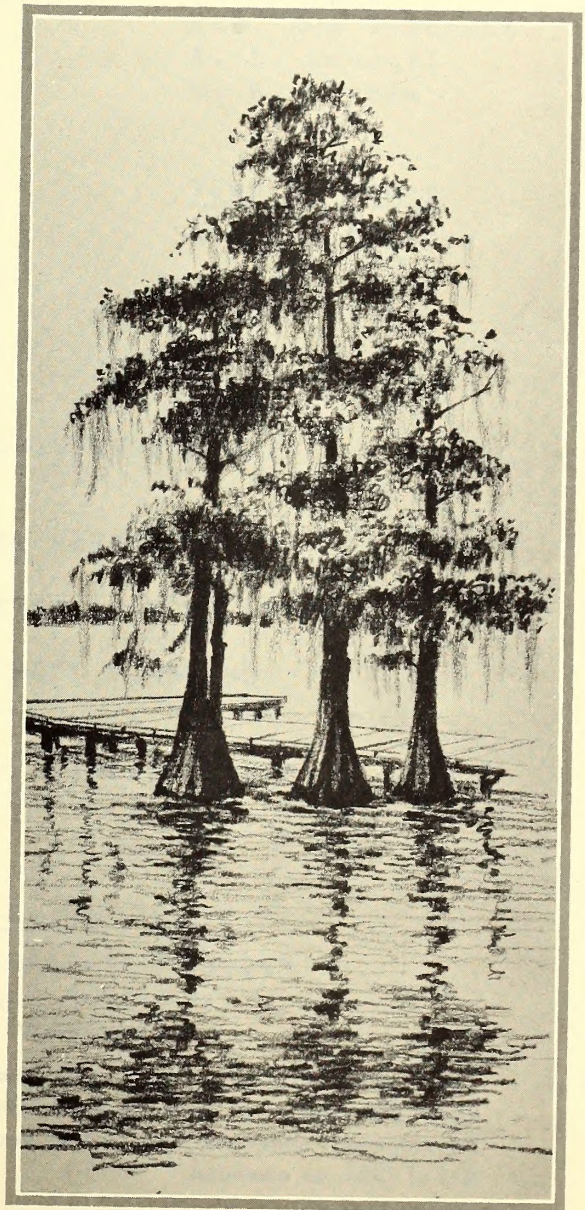
towns with industry and job opportunities. Because the town has only one industry and no potential sites, further economic growth is expected to coincide with development of the recreation resource.

The information in this text encourages development of the town's greatest potential: day use recreation. Several suggestions promote day use primarily for residents of its own Columbus County and the southeastern part of the state. The Community Facilities Plan builds upon the information base. Suggestions for community betterment are related to the financial capabilities of the town and its potential for development. The discussion on recreation is the focus of proposals stemming from the Community Facilities Plan.

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY

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## INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the century, the future of Lake Waccamaw was established. Activities were then centered around a resort hotel, a tool company, and dealings in forestry holdings and wood products. The development of the early land use base has more recently been a boy's school, a small commercial area, and residential development. The present character of this section of Columbus County is one of increased forestry operations, an expanded tool manufacturing concern, and a more active family resort area along the northern half of Lake Waccamaw's shoreline. The total of these activities have formed the Town of Lake Waccamaw.

The Lake Waccamaw area has been limited in its development by geography and accessibility. The land is almost totally flat and is swampy in the area closeby the lake. One noted hindrance to development has been the presence of the Green Swamp to the east and south. Man has avoided this wildlife infested wetland area in favor of the somewhat higher north shore. Had it not been for a railroad line serving Columbia, South Carolina, to Wilmington, North Carolina, that passes within one half mile of the lake, this area still might be even less populated than it presently is. The railroad provided the link for tourists at an early date. The commercial area subsequently developed close to the railroad stop and along the highway which parallels the railroad.

The character of the lake, its natural beauty and use, has been preserved because of accessibility and location. Access from the south is nearly impossible today. Persons coming into the area usually do so via Whiteville or Wilmington on U. S. routes 74-76.

Although the location of this lake places it in competition with other water bodies, it has retained a character apart from an active "honky-tonk" kind of usage. Within 50 miles is White Lake and many beaches along the Atlantic Coast. There are many persons who prefer the coastal atmosphere to that of lakeshore activity. Had a lake of this size been located further inland and close to a city the size of Wilmington, the land around the lake would be under much greater pressure for development. This circumstance of location creates a unique opportunity for the community to further develop a more relaxed family type recreation area.

For decades the lake and swamp areas have been well used by sportsmen. The 9,000 acre cypress-lined Lake Waccamaw is suitable for boating, swimming, fishing and water sports. Today the Green Swamp remains a habitat for wild game, especially deer and bear. Hunting is the prime winter sport in this part of Columbus County.



Land development in the immediate lake area was as stagnant as the dark waters of the swamp until two venturesome individuals with an idea purchased 3 miles of shoreline covered with dense growth and flanked by the Green Swamp. This land was cleared in the late 1940's and filled by soil taken from a 55' wide canal that was a part of the overall project. In effect, this endeavor created a three mile island along the west lakeshore and the canal. In toto, the dream was transposed into 262 lots of 50' width for use as cottage sites.

The significance of this project lies in the method used to convert unused swampland into profitable residential use. This method of reclaiming wetland will be of increasing value as the demand for cottage and home sites becomes greater. It further enhances the potential of opening vacant land to development in this area. However, septic tank filter fields are not desirable in this method of residential development.

In recent years there have been other areas of residential development which have not been as difficult to make ready for construction. North of the lake inside the town limits is the Lakewood Subdivision with ten residences. A dozen more lots are available in the development. Beyond the town limits on the eastern shore is the Bella Coola subdivision which now has eight year-round homes and five summer cottages. Twenty-nine vacant lots remain for residential use.

The most recent development, Lake Waccamaw Shores, was stopped before it made progress because of health department regulations. The soil conditions within the Lake Waccamaw Shores development were found to be unsuitable for septic tank filter fields. Although the area is vast enough to house approximately 400 structures, the health department suggested that development be temporarily limited to 25 homes and that each should use an individual package treatment unit (chlorination) for its waste disposal system. The effluent of these systems is emptied into the canal. Only two homes have been built thus far in the subdivision. The developers of Lake Waccamaw Shores are drawing up proposals for a waste treatment plant which will serve this one individual subdivision. The eventual system will be designed to meet all requirements of the State Board of Health and the Department of Water and Air Resources. When an acceptable system is installed, this area should find rapid growth as many of the shoreline lots are already privately owned.



## THE LAKE

The water body, Lake Waccamaw, is one of the largest natural inland lakes along the East Coast. It is geologically described as a bay lake within a large pocosin.<sup>1</sup> The normal shoreline of 14.21 miles surrounds the 8,938 acres of Lake Waccamaw. This is a relatively shallow lake; its deepest point is about 14 feet. Much of the shoreline, especially the southern half, is swamp-land.

The lake is fed by underground springs, an annual average of 48 inches of rainfall, and four feeder creeks. In 1925 a dam was built by the state and county of necessity to prohibit the low water levels which the lake would experience during dry spells. This dam, on the southern shore, is the lake's only outlet; the stream formed is called the Waccamaw River.

The lakeshore and adjacent land area has been subject to natural influences in development. Although the area is approximately 50 feet above sea level, the drainage pattern is immature. To further perpetuate the problem, the rock strata underlying the soil cover is itself full of water to the point that rainfall and runoff cannot go anywhere. Thus, the numerous areas of upland swamp which are forestalling development.

A very expensive 3-4 county two state project of drainage canals appears to be the most desirable method of controlling the water table and reducing problems of development. This idea and several others to alleviate the drainage problems have not proceeded beyond the talking stages.

### Lake Use

At the turn of the century, Lake Waccamaw was used for transporting shingles from the swamp and for other commercial endeavors such as the steamboat "Bohemian Girl". More recently the lake has been used entirely for recreational purposes: boating, fishing, skiing and swimming. The Wildlife Resources Commission and the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development act as the enforcement agencies on the lake. The Wildlife Resources Commission licenses boats and inspects them for safety features.

Pier construction permits are issued by the Division of State Parks of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development. According to pier permit records maintained by that agency, there are 175 piers extending into Lake Waccamaw in varying lengths.

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<sup>1</sup> A pocosin is an upland swamp.





LAKE WACCAMAW, N. C.



0 1 2  
SCALE IN MILES

## AREA TOPOGRAPHY

SOURCE:  
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
WHITEVILLE QUAD, 1955  
BOLTON QUAD, 1954



The lake is to be permanently maintained by the State for the public use.

#### SLOPE CHARACTERISTICS IN THE PLANNING AREA

The lack of slope has created a major drainage problem for this community. As part of the Coastal Plain, the topography is flat with only minor, gradual changes in elevation. The topographic map section included adjacent to this text illustrates the poor drainage and flat topography. For the most part, the elevation in the planning area is between 45-60 feet above sea level. Immature drainage patterns have helped to create the many areas of local upland swamp. The geologic substructure is itself so full of water that no additional water can permeate through the water-logged top layers of the soil. Swamps surround the planning area; the remainder of the undeveloped shoreline likewise is a swamp.

The planning area lies within one major drainage basin which has as its outlet the Waccamaw River. Within the immediate community the drainage ditches have created smaller drainage basins and subsequently sanitary problems because ditches are in need of cleaning and channel work. The flat topography and poor drainage will be a problem in the establishment of a municipal sewerage system; pump stations will be a necessary part of a municipal system.

Another effect of the poor drainage and flat topography is the pollution effect upon the lake. Runoff from thousands of acres of land north and east of town eventually empties into the lake. Because the water has no suitable direction of runoff, drainage channels remain full and streams are sluggish. The effect is a stagnation of drainage channels and feeders which empty into Lake Waccamaw. Closely related to this drainage area is the pollution of the lake which is created in Lake Waccamaw (town) and upstream areas which likewise have no sewage collection systems.

Attention is needed to the seriousness of this problem. The consequences to the local community if pollution continues unchecked will be widespread. When the word is spread that pollution is increasing in the lake, most individuals will be discouraged from building or improving their existing property. There may also be little demand for rental housing, a reduced demand for a vacation at Lake Waccamaw, a declining demand for seasonal goods, little demand for local shoreline property, a large demand to sell vacation property by summer users, a declining population to support what few commercial establishments exist, and a less legitimate fishing habitat would evolve with increased pollution.



Some of these effects are already noticed. Opinions and facts expressed by the county health officials have slowed new residential development on shoreline land that would otherwise be desirable for homesites. Although there are no health restrictions on building sites, the health department expresses the unsuitability for septic tank filter fields. This, too, further limits development -- but with sound reasoning. Perhaps the lack of water and sewer systems and unclean beach areas in the community have discouraged more than a few families from returning here for their vacations or from building a summer cottage at this lake.

## SOIL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE PLANNING AREA

As a means of generally classifying and describing the local soils, four soil association groups can be determined.<sup>1</sup> Based upon the ability of the soils to permit water passage, their natural drainage, and textural makeup, the soil associations have been formulated which are applicable to the planning area. Accompanying the text is a general soil map (page 8) for the Lake Waccamaw Planning Area which illustrates the locations and relationships of the four soil associations. More detailed soils information will be needed for specific site analysis. The soil associations and a description of each soil therein follows:

### Group I      The Goldsboro-Norfolk-Marlboro Association

Only ten percent of the planning area's soils are listed in this association. The Group I soils are found only in small areas along U. S. 74-76 in the western part of the town and planning area (see map on page 8). This association has the characteristics of being in areas of nearly level to gently sloping land. The soils which are moderately well to well drained are the best in the planning area.

Forty percent of Group I soils are the Goldsboro soils which have light gray sandy loam surface soils and yellowish brown friable sandy clay loam subsoils. These have slight to moderate limitations for most urban development.

Norfolk soils have only slight limitations for all uses. These soils have light gray sandy loam surfaces and yellowish brown, well drained, friable sandy clay loam subsoils. Norfolk soils make up 30 percent of the Group I association. Marlboro soils provide the final 30 percent of Group I. These have the same surface and sub-

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<sup>1</sup> Source of soils information: Mr. Arlin Weaver, Soil Scientist, for the Soil Conservation Service, County Hall, Whiteville, N. C., 28472.



soil characteristics except that Marlboro subsoils are firm and sticky, sandy clay. Marlboro soils have slight to moderate limitations for all developmental land uses.

Group II      The Lynchburg-Dunbar-Craven Association

The Group II soils are found in approximately 45 percent of the Lake Waccamaw Planning Area. These soils are found in large, nearly level areas, which have moderately well to somewhat poorly drained soils. This soil group is scattered throughout the planning area. Other than swampland, this is the only soil group found along the shoreline inside the town limits. It does have moderate limitations for most urban development uses and severe limitations for septic tank filter fields.

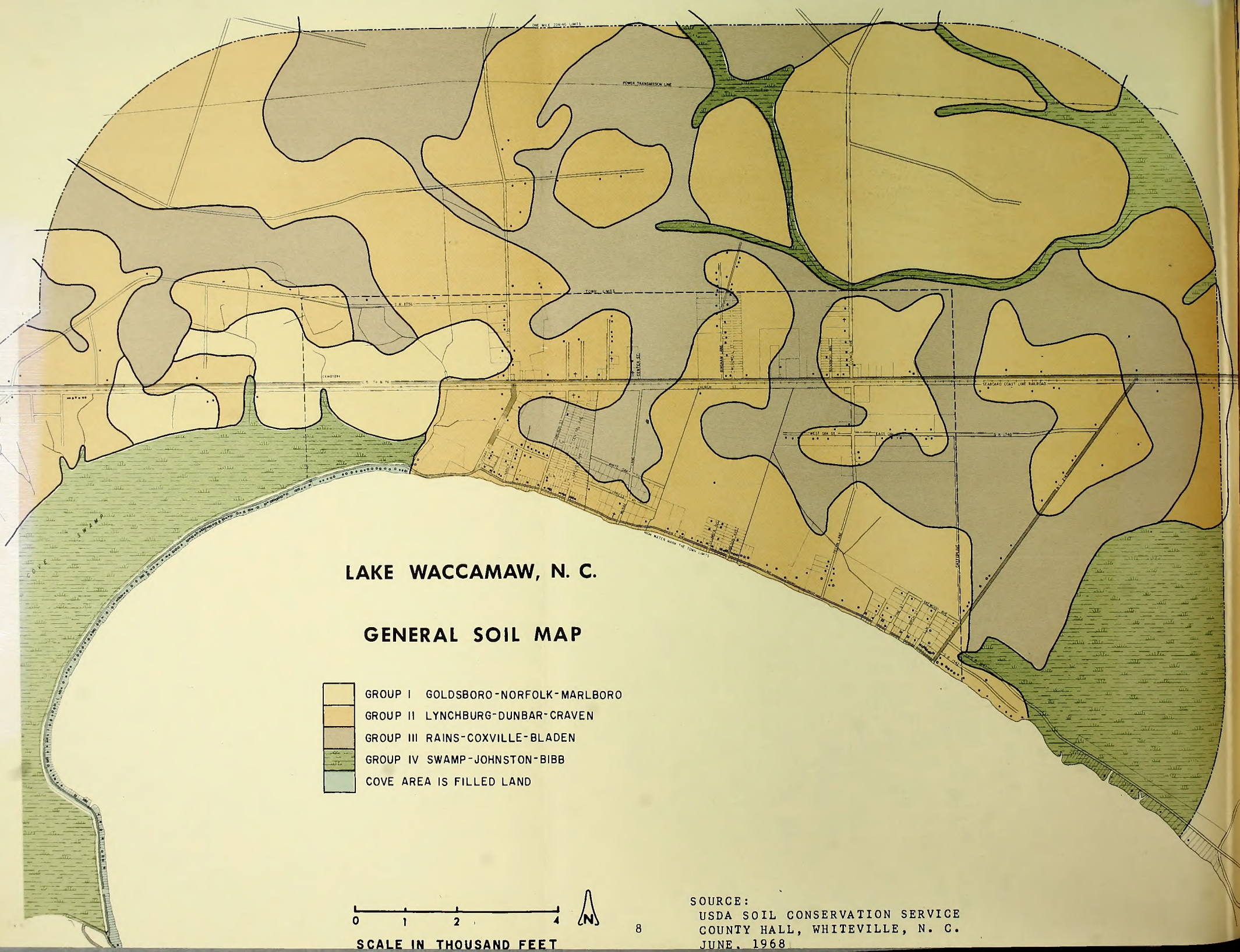
The association is 60 percent Lynchburg soils, 20 percent Dunbar, 10 percent Craven and another 10 percent Goldsboro and Duplin soils. The Lynchburg soils have gray sandy loam surfaces with pale brown to brownish gray friable sandy clay loam subsoils. The Dunbar soils have the same except for firm sandy clay subsoils. Moderate development limitations of Dunbar soils are due to slow permeability and a high water table. The Craven soils have gray to dark gray sandy loam surface soils and firm brown clay to silty clay subsoils. The high shrink-swell potential and slow permeability of Craven soils present moderate to severe limitations for most urban uses.

Group III     The Rains-Coxville-Bladen Association

This association, located away from the lake in the central and eastern part of the town, has severe limitations for most urban development. Group III soils are poorly drained and are found in large continuous flat areas. They make up 30 percent of the planning area.

Half of Group III soils are the Rains series which have dark gray sandy loam surfaces and gray sandy clay loam subsoils. Coxville soils (20 percent of Group III soils) have very dark gray sandy loam to loam surfaces and gray to light gray, firm, sandy clay subsoils. Coxville soils have severe limitations or hazards for urban development uses because of three factors working either individually or collectively: high water table, slow permeability rate, and high shrink-swell potential.







Bladen soils (also 20 percent of Group III) have black to gray sandy loam surfaces and gray pastic clay subsoils. Limitations are similar to Coxville soils. The remaining 10 percent of Group III consists of Dunbar, Lenoir, and Lynchburg soils. These soils have sandy loam surfaces and sandy clay loam to clay subsoils.

#### Group IV     The Swamp-Johnston-Bibb Association

These very poorly drained soils are found in flat, low areas. This soil association is subject to frequent overflow. The soils in this category are of alluvial origin. Nearly 15 percent of the planning area has these soils that are unsuitable for development.

Within the association, Swamp soils account for about 70 percent of the total. Johnston soils make up about 20 percent and the Bibb soils account for the remainder.

Swamp soils are varied in texture and by character very poorly drained. The drainage characteristic coupled with the high water table and long periods of overflow give these soils very severe limitations for all urban development uses.

Johnston soils have black loamy surfaces and gray loamy sand to sand subsoils. The Bibb soils, which are found in narrow strips along small streams, have fine sandy loam surfaces and gray to yellowish brown sandy loam to sandy clay loam subsoils. Again, both are poorly drained alluvial soils which are subject to flooding and are very unsuitable for urban types of land usage.

None of the above associations are determined to be problem free for septic tank users. To further complicate the problem for existing development, it is noted that the Group I soils have very little urban development. This soil association is found in areas presently used for pecan forests and agriculture. The Group I association straddles the west town limits.

Nearly all developed land within the corporate limits has member soils of the Group II association. These soils are prevalent throughout the town. The best conditions for building sites and septic tank filter fields in these soils are to be found on high ground elevations. The Group III soils generally should not have active urban development because of the reasons mentioned in the above discussion.



The muck and alluvial soils of Group IV are those soils characteristic to swamp areas. Very expensive preparation of these soils is necessary before development is possible. As is the case with all soils, especially in the Lake Waccamaw Planning Area, it is important to have soils analyzed before any major development is permitted.

Future development on specific soils and the drainage pattern are closely related. Clearing drainage channels and enlarging the channel system will provide more lots that are suitable for homesites. Improved channels are immediately needed north of U. S. 74-76 along Bingham Lane, near the three churches directly west, and in Branch Creek.

TABLE I

SUMMARY OF SOIL ASSOCIATIONS  
BY SUITABILITY FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
AND SEPTIC TANK FILTER FIELDS

Group I	<p>Goldsboro-Norfolk-Marlboro Association</p> <p>Slight limitations for all uses except septic tank filter fields which is moderate in Goldsboro and Marlboro due to permeability and high water table. This is the best soil association in the planning area. There are no extremely good soils for developmental purposes.</p>
Group II	<p>Lynchburg-Dunbar-Craven Association</p> <p>Moderate to severe limitations due to slow permeability, shrink-swell potential, or high water table.</p>
Group III	<p>Rains-Coxville-Bladen Association</p> <p>Severe limitations due to slow permeability, high water table, high shrink-swell potential and flooding.</p>
Group IV	<p>Swamp-Johnston-Bibb Association</p> <p>Very severe to severe limitations due to flooding, or special drainage problems in area of floodplain. There is also instability of the alluvial soils.</p>



## BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Lake Waccamaw has remained a small community partially because of several barriers that have affected development. The natural barriers of the local swamps, wetlands, the lake, feeder streams, and soils have all restricted urban development. Urban types of land use have approached each of these barriers. The experience has been the crowding of the lakefront with urban use but shying away from swamp and wetland areas through which flow the sluggish feeder streams. The soils have repelled development especially when they were permanently wet. More recently, the soils are limiting urban construction to an increasing degree because they are unsuitable for septic tank drainage fields. The Cove Development has illustrated that swamp areas can be reclaimed for urban use.

Barriers molded by man have taken the following forms: estate land holdings which have maintained large contiguous vacant property, zoning regulations, railroad tracks, and the major highway which bisects part of the town. Large land holdings are the most responsible for slow development throughout the planning area. The main transportation arteries which lie parallel to one another also have withheld contiguous development. The land use map illustrates the development along the north side of U. S. 74-76 as more complete than that next to the southern side of the railroad tracks along Church Street.

Zoning regulations, while insuring a reasonable standard of development, act as a barrier to growth in some areas. For example, hotel and motel land uses can be located in five small areas in the town. A continuous motel development several blocks long is impossible because the zoning ordinance is the barrier applied to discourage this type of unwanted development.

The numerous vacant subdivided lots away from the shoreline illustrates 1) a preference for lakefront lots as long as there are some available and 2) the unsuitability for septic tanks on small lots. Adding a municipal water and sewer system would stimulate internal growth on some of these same parcels. So far, the absence of these two and other community facilities have been barriers or at least depressants to development. Demand for lots at Lake Waccamaw may not be as great as in other lake oriented recreational areas of the state. If this is true, the lack of consumer demand should certainly be added as a barrier to development.

Some barriers are a direct responsibility of the town governing body. Many of the cultural barriers may someday be overcome or modified; the greatest difficulty is overcoming natural influences in the development of the town. A list of barriers and problems to development should be maintained so that consideration and workable programs can be enacted towards eliminating the worst barriers. As additional deterrents are recognized, a course of action for reducing or removing them should be assigned and followed through.







# THE LAND USE SURVEY & ANALYSIS

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## THE LAND USE SURVEY

Lake Waccamaw is a rural resort as the land use pattern will reinforce. Generally, what is not being used for residential land use still remains as farmland and forests. There are 1,470 acres in the Town of Lake Waccamaw; only 439 acres are developed for urban use. The developed land area is mostly along the shoreline -- but just one "tier" of land is being used. Only in a few areas is the land being used for residential purposes immediately beyond the shoreline. The best example of this is in the eastern portion of town behind the lakefront development -- the area known as Lakewood Subdivision. Beyond the shore development, major development follows Broadway Street to the commercial area and then stretches out along U. S. 74-76.

The following pages relate information which was obtained from a land use survey of the Town of Lake Waccamaw and its fringe areas. The survey, taken on April 11, 1968, entailed recording each parcel of land by its use. The analysis and findings are factual information which will be used in subsequent planning studies for the town. It is a necessary starting point to record what the community has, where it is located, and in what amounts it exists in relationship to other land uses before intelligent plans can be made to improve the liveability within the community. The existing land use is shown on page .

### Residential Land Uses









A variety of seasonal cottages and year-round housing is found within the town limits of this small community. Recently, few seasonal structures have been built; the trend is toward converting cottages into year-round dwellings. There are 225 permanent dwellings on 93.5 acres of land in town and 122 seasonal cottages on 31.5 acres. Half of the seasonal residences are in the Cove Development along the northwestern shoreline. All but four cottages in town are along the shoreline. There are eight mobile homes scattered throughout the town area that are used for residential purposes also.

Temporary residents are served by rental cottages, Jones Hotel, and tourist cottages. Many cottage owners use their seasonal dwellings on weekends all year long.

Residential development is found along the lakeshore that is a part of the town area in an almost solid progression. Older residential areas developed in Wananish and north of U. S. 74-76 along Bingham Lane, Schulken Street, and N. C. rural road 1740. Newer residential construction is, for the most part, either along or within a hundred yards of the shoreline.

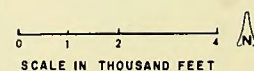


## EXISTING LAND USE

	RESIDENTIAL
	COMMERCIAL
	INDUSTRIAL
	INSTITUTIONAL
	SOCIAL & CULTURAL
	CHURCH
	POST OFFICE
	TOWN HALL

APRIL 11, 1968

LAKE WACCAMAW





## RECENT SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT

- WACCAMAW SHORES
- LAKE COVE SUBDIVISION
- McRAE WOODS
- LAKEWOOD SUBDIVISION
- SHAWNEE ACRES
- BELLA COOLA ESTATES
- (A) Continuation of LAKEWOOD SUBDIVISION
- (B) Proposed Subdivision

AUGUST 1, 1968

LAKE WACCAMAW

0 1 2 4  
SCALE IN THOUSAND FEET



Several subdivisions have opened up to development in the last ten years or so. Bella Coola, The Lake Cove, and Waccamaw Shores are all shoreline developments. The newest area, Waccamaw Shores, has been prohibited by the N. C. Health Department from full development until an adequate sewer system can be worked out and installed. Only two houses have been constructed. The Lake Cove has a mixture of seasonal and permanent dwellings. There are 64 temporary and 49 permanent houses stretched along the shoreline in the cove area. Bella Coola has eight year-round dwellings and five seasonal cottages. There are still vacant lots to develop along these shoreline areas. (See map showing subdivisions on page 14).

Building permits have only been issued since the beginning of 1964. New housing permits issued during the past four years (1964-1967) numbered a total of 11. The significance of this low number illustrates the physical limitations and restrictions of septic tank filter fields and a low demand for homesites elsewhere inside the corporate limits.

#### Housing Conditions

A survey of the appearance of housing was made in conjunction with the land use survey. Although this is a visual appraisal, the results often produce valuable information in that poorer areas of town are highlighted. This survey will give the local officials an opportunity to focus attention to specific areas which need upgrading. Usually poor housing reflects accompanying conditions which are in need of attention.

The housing conditions were allotted to fit one of the following four defined categories:

Standard housing -- well maintained property and buildings.

Housing in need of minor repairs -- requires minor maintenance, paint, landscape cleanup.

Housing in need of major repairs -- sagging roof or porch, cracked foundation.

Dilapidated housing -- either vacated or so rundown as to be a fire hazard, usually lacking any paint and so far gone as to be economically unfeasible to renovate.

Within the town limits there are a total of 233 permanent structures lived in year round. Of this total, 223 are single family dwellings; the remainder includes four mobile homes lived in year round, one triplex, and five duplexes. The 233 structures house 242 units for year-round residents. The condition of housing based upon the above criteria is shown in Table II, page 17.







TABLE II

HOUSING UNITS BY CONDITION OF STRUCTURE  
LAKE WACCAMAW

	Year-Round		Seasonal		Total	
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
Standard	169	70	87	74	256	71
In need of minor repairs	45	18	26	22	71	20
In need of major repairs	16	7	4	4	20	6
Dilapidated	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>3</u>
Total Units	242	100	117	100	359	100

The accompanying housing conditions map illustrates the location of the findings. Nearly all of the dilapidated housing is located north of U. S. 74-76. Homes needing major and minor repair are scattered throughout the community.

Seasonal use residential units inside the corporate limits total 117. These units include privately owned homes, cottages, mobile homes, and rental units used for temporary residence at the lake. Of the 91 which are used exclusively by the owner, roughly one-third are in need of repairs. A cleanup effort is likely when the owner returns to his cottage each year. Most of the 24 rental units (all but two) are in sound condition. The other two temporary units are mobile homes located on shoreline property.

Referring again to the above table, the reader will note that twenty-six percent of the housing units in town need some degree of repair. The owners of these 91 dwelling units should be encouraged to do something to enhance and improve their property. The town has the power to condemn the dilapidated housing structures and require the owner to tear them down. Many towns have successfully used this method of improving community appearance while eliminating some of the health problems and fire hazards.

Beyond the corporate limits but within the one mile fringe area, there are a total of 110 permanent structures. All are single family units; three are mobile homes. The visual condition survey shows the following:



TABLE III

## CONDITION OF HOUSING IN PLANNING FRINGE AREA

	<u>Units</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Standard	53	48
In need of minor repair	13	12
In need of major repair	13	12
Dilapidated	<u>31</u>	<u>28</u>
Total	110	100

The visual survey results suggest that half of the fringe area housing is substandard. An alarmingly high percentage of fringe area homes (28 percent) should be destroyed because of safety conditions which were accounted for in the visual appraisal.

Within the corporate limits, there are additional residential units which are used by institutions. The Boy's Home, Good Shepherd Home and Waccamaw Vocational School's dormitory are in this category. Only the Vocational School's dormitory, which is an old hotel, needs major repair work.

Not included in the above totals are vacant housing units. Fifteen vacant houses were counted in the planning area. Six of these are in town. In each case, the structure is dilapidated and should be completely destroyed. Eliminating those areas of poorest housing by replacing old rundown housing units with new structures is possible through individual loans for low cost housing made available through the Farmer's Home Administration. Local area offices extending these services are in the Agricultural Building Annex in Whiteville. Individual arrangements can be discussed by contacting this agency.

Factors which have contributed to the most blighted conditions can probably be reflected to the lack of adequate codes and ordinances dealing with the platting of lots, street layout, side yard requirements, building inspection and similar practices at the time the area was developed.

#### Availability of Housing

Most of the permanent housing in the Town of Lake Waccamaw is owner occupied. Few dwellings are available to families who wish to rent a home; however, there appears to be a sizeable demand for rental units by persons working at Riegel Paper Company and at various firms in Whiteville. There are no apartments in the planning area -- other than five duplexes and a triplex.



To further complicate matters within this small population, very few houses, whether year-round or seasonal, are for sale. Few weekend cottages are available.

### Commercial Areas

There is no well-developed business district or commercial cluster in the planning area. In the Town of Lake Waccamaw is an area stretching along U. S. 74-76 near route 214 which has some businesses but no really complete shopping area. A super-market and an ABC store are adjacent to one another in the same building. Surrounding the large parking lot in front of this building is a gas station, the town's only bank, a post office and a craft shop. Across the highway (74-76) is the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad terminal, a remnant of years ago. Beyond this group of individual enterprises to the west are two gas stations side by side.

A second commercial district is located two miles east of the above group. The businesses consist of a small grocery and a gas station which are located in Wananish, a small community that is now a part of the Town of Lake Waccamaw.

Other than these two areas, commercial enterprises (excluding tourist accommodations) are nonexistent. The lakeshore land use has a hotel and several rental cottages. These have seen their day. No new tourist accommodations have been constructed for some time. A skating rink, two concession stands, and a fishing supply store are the remainder of this type of land use within the town. The commercial land use totals 5.75 acres in town.

Commercial establishments are not especially seasonal. Nearly all are open for business the entire year. The heaviest commercial sales occur during the summer in conjunction with the tourist season. A concession stand at Hobbs Harbor is a seasonal business supported primarily by fishermen, boaters and tourists.

### Industry

At the present time, and since 1900, there has been but one industry located in town. The Council Tool Company located on six acres in the Wananish section is a manufacturer of implements used in the naval stores, logging, and forestry operations. These are primarily drop forgings and cutting tools (axes, post-hole diggers, etc.). The location of the industry was a whim of its founder; he wished to be closer to his favorite fishing grounds. The plant today has the character of being a "foot-loose" industry in that its location is not due to any purely economic reasoning.

Council Tool Company employs 57 persons. About half of the personnel do not live in town.



Periodically, the town has attempted to attract industry. There has been no success, however, primarily because of the lack of public services to offer a prospective industry. (See the economy section of this report). The Columbus County Economic Development Commission, with headquarters in Whiteville, has only one site to show to potential new industry. This is a 75 acre site that is two miles beyond the west town limits. Despite the vast amount of open space within the town limits, no industrial sites have been offered. Again, the lack of water and sewer facilities is the reason.

There are many industrial employees living in and around the Town of Lake Waccamaw. There would be a labor supply for industry if a new plant could be attracted. The industrial personnel living in town, for the most part, are employed by Riegel Paper Company at Riegelwood or by National Spinning and other companies in Whiteville. Some of the industrial employees now living in Lake Waccamaw are doing so because of the unavailability of housing in Whiteville and the Acme-Delco area.

#### Institutional Usage

Institutional land use in Lake Waccamaw is a major category to be analyzed. A sizeable portion of the developed land is in this use. This acreage is not being taxed, although the Boy's Home does contribute financially to the local government voluntarily. The town should solicit voluntary contributions from institutionally owned land to support its already low tax revenues and/or permit no more institutional land use through zoning. Following are the land uses of the institutional category which collectively represent 167 acres of urban land use.

The Boy's Home of North Carolina has the largest acreage and percentage of the town's institutional land area. The property includes 40 acres of campus near the lake and 108 acres of farmland in the northwest portion of town. The Boy's Home is licensed by the State Department of Public Welfare as a child-caring institution. The Home is largely supported by voluntary contributions from civic clubs, church groups, business firms, fraternal organizations and individuals. The 100 boys that are now living here are between the ages of 10-18. The Boy's Home grows some crops and raises cattle and hogs on their property.

The Home of the Good Shepherd, a rehabilitation home for alcoholics, is located on the northeast shore of the lake. The land area for this facility is two acres. There are approximately twenty men now residing there.

Christian Summer Camp, also on the northeast shore of Lake Waccamaw, is located on a four acre tract. The camp is used in the summertime for numerous group activities.



The Waccamaw Vocational School, formerly known as the Winterhaven School, has reopened for classes after being closed during the 1966-67 school year. This school is sponsored by the Seventh Day Adventist Church for children of lower income parents who cannot afford to pay higher tuition charges now found in many of the other schools in the nation which are operated by this denomination.

Before last year's closing, the local school had 52 students attending classes. The school has bought four vacated buildings and the administration is readying these facilities in an attempt to regain its past operating size. There are currently ten students attending classes. Six of the students room at the old hotel on the lakefront which was purchased by the school for use as a dormitory. The school and related facilities are situated on two acres.

Wildlife Resources Commission access. Even though Lake Waccamaw is a state owned water body, the State has done little to assure the public adequate access to the lake. The one acre public access area located on the cove section is designed to provide an absolute minimum of services: a concrete boat launching ramp and a parking area for boater's cars. This public access area is not to be used for a swimming area, rather only by fishermen and boaters. The problem is that the access area is provided by an agency whose interest is fishing rather than shoreline recreation.

Cemetery. Located along the north side of U. S. 74-76 at the west town limits, this cemetery is two acres in size.

The Town Hall-Fire Station for Lake Waccamaw is located in a brick building across from the campus of Boy's Home on Broadway Street. The building houses fire and rescue equipment and is the office of the Town Clerk and police. The building is on a 1/2 acre site.

Churches. Six churches are located at Lake Waccamaw on seven acres of land. Four of the churches are along routes 74-76. The survey taken in March related that the local residents have an abundant choice of denominations for a small community. Very few families go outside of the community to attend church.

Post Offices. Both Wananish and Lake Waccamaw have a U. S. Post Office. The larger of the two is located west of Hill's Thriftway Supermarket in Lake Waccamaw in a new brick building. Adjacent to Council Tool Company in Wananish is the location of the second local post office. Together the two facilities use less than a half acre of land.



## Commercial Recreation Areas

Public beach access area and bathhouse. This privately owned and operated land area is not really a well developed recreation facility. Only two of the 11 acres are developed. The location is perhaps the best on the lake because it is most accessible from U. S. 74-76. The facilities now there are those which served a population of bygone decades. There has been no evident attempt to upgrade this site to make it more usable by the local and/or the regional population. Because of its key location, this area is ideal for a planned recreational facility.

There are two alternatives for its development. Since there is no park on the lake and very few parks within twenty miles, this 11 acre site, known as the Weaver property, may be extremely valuable as a county or regional park. The other choice is to encourage a private developer to design a commercial facility. Either could create problems. Many problems will be alleviated, if not eliminated, by having the developer submit to the town his plans before developing the site. The proper commercial use of this site would be a boost to the property tax brought into the town. The use of this site as a county park would assure public access to the lake at a key location.

The Lake Waccamaw Club. Located on 1/4 acre along the northeast shoreline where route 214 jogs away from the lakefront, this private dinner club uses no more than a small lot. Parking problems need attention here since adequate parking facilities on the property are nonexistent. The curve in the road presents traffic flow problems at this site also. There are certain times of the day and/or night when this land use creates problems with neighboring property owners. Six motel-type tourist units are at the back of this property.

Skating Rink. This is one of the few places in the town where the younger population can find evening entertainment. The rink is heavily used during the summer months. Parking is usually adequate. The property, which includes a concession stand and residence, is on Lake Shore Drive. Adjacent to this two acre property is the Good Shepherd Home. The two land uses of the rink and rehabilitation home are an example of unsuitable neighbors. The operation of each is entirely different from the other. An adequate zoning ordinance would have prohibited this poor mixture of land uses.

## Transportation

Land used to provide access to each property within the community collectively is often a major portion of the developed urban landscape. In town, the land used for transportation purposes totals 120.7 acres or 27.5 percent of the developed acreage. This category includes all roads and streets in town plus



the railroad. Acreage for these facilities are right-of-way measurements:

	<u>Acres</u>
Railroad right-of-way	29.4
Street system	90.8
Other	<u>.5</u>
Total	120.7

Further consideration is given to the street system because of its relation to future development. This discussion covers traffic circulation and street conditions.

A related transportation usage (if we stretch the idea of transport to include communication) is a half acre tract used for housing a telephone substation. This small parcel is located on the north side of U. S. 74-76 west of the Esso gas station. This acreage will be included in the transportation land use total.

#### Traffic Circulation

With the widespread use of the automobile as a necessity during the past decades, the existing road pattern in Lake Waccamaw town has become more and more ineffective. The most traffic problems are naturally during the summer weekends when day users come onto and through local streets to use the lake. The crux of the problem is that access to the lake can be gained from four points off U. S. 74-76 which brings in the majority of traffic and especially all of the east-west traffic to the lake-front. Once this traffic reaches the lake, it all is funneled onto the Cove Road (the west shoreline road) and Lake Shore Drive (which begins at Broadway Street and follows the shore to the east). This shoreline drive is narrow and has many access driveways and dead-end streets emptying onto it. Of necessity, the speed limit on this street is low. These conditions all perpetuate congestion when lake use is greatest.

Looking at the map of the planning area, two problems can be easily noticed which could be rectified but at a somewhat prohibitive cost. First, the cove section has outlets at each end -- some  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles apart. Persons coming to the lake from the west could come more directly to the lake and avoid driving through the commercial area and major beach area where congestion is usually the greatest if more access could be provided into the Cove development. The swamp nearly prohibits this -- a financial impossibility, if not a physical impossibility.

A second noticeable problem is the lack of any alternate circulation away from the shore but parallel to it. There is no through road for local residents to use when they wish to get



from one point to another in a minimum of time. During summer months the traffic circulation would be aided if some traffic could be channeled away from the lakefront. An example of a parallel road to the lakefront would begin at the Town Hall and follow the existing road east to Cameron Street from where it would continue with a new paved road to the Lion's Ball Park and further east until connecting with the existing Lakewood Avenue. This would not necessarily have to be an expensive project. Some cost might be eliminated if the town could exchange land for rights-of-way. At the same time, as development takes place, a better road system will have to tie the community together. A similar parallel road would be impossible in the cove section, hence the suggestion of a road cutting across the swamp to the north. Cost may be prohibitive for any additional alignments in the cove.

To the north a two lane parallel road is also desirable 200-300 yards from U. S. 74-76. This would provide better internal circulation for these residents of the town and eliminate some of the danger of getting on U. S. 74-76 to travel but a short distance. U. S. 74-76 would be freed of some of the hazards that now exist.

#### Street Conditions

With the completion of the widened Broadway Street project, the town has its first well constructed traffic artery. The remainder of streets lack curb and gutters and the traveled portions are narrow even though the rights-of-way for the local streets are adequate. Drainage ditches are found along many local roads; however, in some areas the streets are not adequately drained and minor flooding develops. Other streets are unpaved and become muddy after rains.

Street conditions in the fringe area represent similar problems. Those fringe area streets which are part of the State highway system have adequate surface drainage.

#### Vacant Land

Within the corporate limits are large parcels of unused vacant land and still more property that is now being used for agricultural purposes (also classified as vacant land). The undeveloped land consists of 70 percent of the town area. At least four subdivisions are mostly void of development. In these locations residential lots with 45 foot to 200 foot front footage are available. (All are in town).

Shoreline lots are also undeveloped in several areas. Fourteen vacant lots can still be found in the cove section which contains the most concentrated shoreline development. The very southern part of the cove has 33 additional vacant lots with 60 foot frontage. Along the northern shoreline are vacant parcels



with more than 200 foot footage. Most of this shoreline land has been residentially zoned.

The smaller in town lots are not suitable for development by today's standards. The present method of sewage disposal by septic tanks is unsuitable for subdivision and closely developed residential areas which are being promoted through existing lot size. Drainage fields for septic tanks require larger lots than those now platted. A minimum lot size ordinance should be established which will reduce the septic tank drainage field problems in local soils. Not all pollution will be checked by this minor regulation, however, and a municipal system will not curtail all problems. Past development in town is too scattered to include all residential land use clusters in a single system because of the cost of installing and maintaining such a large system for a small population base. The problem is magnified because the vast amount of vacant land will be slow to develop without a sewerage collection system. Refer to the land use map for the visible depiction of the scattered parcels of residential development separated by large areas of vacant land.

Of further disadvantage to the town are the permanently wet areas which are very unlikely to develop. The costs of drainage are prohibitive and the land is especially unfavorable in relation to the community's other vacant land. The wetland is mostly inside the western city limits. Much additional wetland is in the fringe area including Cove Swamp.

An overworked point, to be sure, but it bears repeating in relation to the existing vacant land: without an area-wide drainage project and the installation of municipal services such as a sewage system, much of the town's vacant land can be expected to remain in an inactive state and to realize the lowest possible tax returns for the community. The fact that very little vacant acreage in town has been subdivided for development substantiates this state of inactivity.

The highest elevations of land in the planning area is the vacant fringe area land away from the lake. Presently held as forest and as farmland, these undeveloped areas are being used to their greatest potential -- with the exception of industrial usage.

#### Cost of Vacant Land

The most expensive vacant lots are naturally developable shoreline property. The cove section lots which are currently selling for \$75 per front foot represent the highest property cost. Elsewhere in town along the shoreline, costs of \$60-75 per front foot for lots running 150 feet in depth are common. Away from the lake to U. S. 74-76 lots sell for \$30 per front foot. Six estates have the remainder of undeveloped land tied



up at the present time. Shoreline lots in the fringe area subdivisions are similar to those in town along the lakefront.

The table below summarizes all use and non-use of land in the Town of Lake Waccamaw on April 11, 1968.

TABLE IV

ACREAGE SUMMARY OF IN-TOWN LAND USE

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Developed Land		
Residential	135.00	30.8
Year Round	93.5 acres	
Seasonal	31.5 acres	
Commercial	5.75	1.3
Industrial	6.00	1.4
Institutional	167.00	38.1
Commercial Recreation	4.25	1.0
Transportation	<u>120.71</u>	<u>27.5</u>
Subtotal	438.71	100.0
Undeveloped (Vacant) Land	<u>1031.29</u>	
Total In-Town Acreage	1470.00	

Percent of in-town land developed -- 29.84%  
 Undeveloped land in Lake Waccamaw -- 70.16%



## CONCLUSION

The lake has been the focus of activity and building during the town's history. Little local development is clustered. Instead, building has stretched along the three primary traffic arteries: the road following the lake's northern shoreline, the region's main east-west route of U. S. 74-76 and Broadway Street which connects these other two major traffic arteries.

The Town of Lake Waccamaw has maintained two and possibly three identifiable communities. The presence of a post office at Wananish perpetuates an historical identity derived before this settlement was combined with the somewhat larger community to its west. A third community could be defined from the lakefront development. The major reason for separate communities or neighborhoods standing apart is a result of the large amounts of undeveloped acreage between them.

The categories of developed land uses make up a very small percentage of the town's total acreage. Fuller development is directly related to solving the sanitary problems and providing more buildable lots through a better drainage system of channels and ditches. The low amount of commercial acreage hints at another problem -- the lack of some necessary commercial outlets and services. Two other discrepancies within the existing land use structure are the large amounts of developed acreage used for institutional usage and the small industrial acreage which houses only one company. A combination of a municipal water and sewer system and additional road construction parallel to the Lake Shore Drive and on the north side of U. S. 74-76 might open up more residential and industrial areas to development. Many potential homebuilders may be discouraged from building a home away from the lakefront until public access is improved. Until these developmental aids are installed, the imbalance of land use types will exist within the Town of Lake Waccamaw.







# THE POPULATION & ECONOMY STUDY

THE POPULATION 28

THE ECONOMY 32



## THE POPULATION

Lake Waccamaw is a natural tourist attraction. The town's population, therefore, varies in number and composition with the seasons. The biggest change occurs in July and August when tourists seek water-oriented recreation and relaxing ways of lakeshore living. The population of the town consists of over 900 permanent residents. In the summer, however, the population just about triples as a result of the influx of vacationing families.

The permanent population is located both along the lake and inland. The greatest concentration of residences are within a block of the lake's north shoreline. Recently, more families are converting summer cottages into year-round homes on the lake-front. New residential growth is being justifiably curtailed by health officials who do not wish to promote a greater population with existing sanitary conditions. Prospective builders are sometimes discouraged after hearing about lake pollution and the difficulty of getting workable septic tank filter fields.

The town's resident population is supplemented by the Boy's Home of North Carolina which has 100 residents between the ages of 10-18. This homogenous population has been added to the other residential inhabitants to obtain the current population count which follows.

From the land use survey of the town, the number of year-round homes within the corporate limits was determined to be 242. A questionnaire survey of in-town residents during the last week in March, 1968, indicated that the average family size is 3.4 persons. Using this figure as a multiplier, Lake Waccamaw has a permanent population of 823 persons (242 structures x 3.4 persons per family). When the Boy's Home and Good Shepherd Home residents are included, the current population of the Town of Lake Waccamaw as of March, 1968, is estimated to be 933 persons.

The Lake Waccamaw population thus has increased by approximately 153 inhabitants since the 1960 U. S. Census count when 780 persons were enumerated. The previous decade had realized a population increase of 205 persons from 1950 to 1960. This increase was primarily the result of annexation of the cove section of the lake during the early 1950's and the opening of the Boy's Home in 1956.

Since incorporation in 1911, the town has had a small, but steady, increase in population each decade. The increase averages 135 persons per decade. This figure has been influenced by the one annexation of the cove subdivision with 151 persons and the increase in the number of Boy's Home residents.



The area one mile beyond the town limits in all directions has 112 housing structures. Using the same number of persons per residence as in town, the fringe area contains about 380 persons. Together the town and one mile fringe area (the planning area) contain approximately 1,288 people.

The town's white population lives close to the lake and between the lake and U. S. 74-76. The majority of the Negro population lives north of U. S. 74-76 on the fringes of the town.

For the permanent residents, the Town of Lake Waccamaw is a "bedroom community." Most of the employed persons have to commute to their jobs in Whiteville or in the Acme-Delco area. There are few activities and opportunities for local employment.

In the summer, tourists and resort cottage property owners make use of the lake. Most of the summer tourists are family groups who return year after year. The length of stay varies from a few days to the entire summer. The popularity of doing things as a family has been maintained at Lake Waccamaw partially because of the absence of active organized recreation facilities and programs similar to those found at Myrtle Beach or White Lake which seek to attract teenagers.

Little information is available concerning this summer population. The age structure of the population and usage of the lake varies with the following reasons for coming to the lake. Summer lake users are: tourists including cottage owners, weekly and overnight renters and guests, families, parties, and individuals who come for one day. As might be expected, summer weekends are the most crowded at Lake Waccamaw. Weekend use of the lake begins for some families in March and extends through October.

Summer residences on the lakeshore are owned by persons living in Dillon and Florence, South Carolina, Graham, High Point, Burlington, Fayetteville, Concord, Whiteville, and Lumberton, North Carolina, to name but a few. Many of these families have been coming to Lake Waccamaw for years. Those living in towns close to the lake frequently use the summer home on weekends year-round. There are 93 such residences used as vacation homes by families who maintain a permanent home in another community.

Generally, it can be said that there are not enough rental units at Lake Waccamaw to meet the summer demand. Few new rental units have been built so that the shoreline rental structures are, for the most part, lakefront relics of the 1930's. Presently, there are a total of 24 rental units in the community plus a 16 unit hotel. All but four of these rental units are on shoreline property.



The future growth of Lake Waccamaw presents some interesting problems and potentials. The shoreline is and will continue to be the focal point of development. Within the town limits there are presently 75 undeveloped shoreline lots of various sizes which could eventually be used for residential purposes. If each of these lots eventually houses a family, the population of the town could increase by 255 persons. Also between the shore and U. S. 74-76 there are 100 known undeveloped residential lots which could boost the population by 350 persons should development in these lots be complete within a twenty year planning period. Together these undeveloped lots could raise the in-town population to approximately 1,550. When access is improved by the realignment and upgrading of U. S. 74-76, the major east-west route in this area, it is expected that more families will desire to become year-round residents in this community.

Beyond the town limits approximately six miles of shoreline land is undeveloped. Most of this land is swampy and/or inaccessible at the present time. The demand for shoreline land by developers may create the need for access entirely around the lake in the future. Numerous building sites might be offered as a result of access to and clearing of the presently wild land areas.

Annexation during this time would likewise cause a population increase. The present population in outlying areas is not sufficient to warrant consideration of annexation at this time. The installation of a municipal sewerage system would change this situation rapidly. Many lots that are unsuitable for development because of septic tank problems could be immediately developed.

Assuming that funds for a sewerage system are eventually granted by the Farmer's Home Administration or any other government agency, the system will have to be built so that it can adequately handle the wastes of the peak tourist season. Since no accurate statistics relating to summer population are available, a population estimate relying on known factors is necessary. There are a total of 359 permanent and seasonal residential structures in the town which provide approximately 430 dwelling units for the peak tourist season. By applying an average family size of 3.4, the summer residence population could reach a peak of 1,462 persons. Day users coming to the lake might more than double this figure on certain weekends; however, this summer population may decrease over the next few years if sewage facilities are not provided.

With sewage treatment facilities (municipal system), improvements of community facilities such as beach access, public restrooms and recreational areas, new and updated recreation facilities and tourist promotion, the potential for increased lake and land use is tremendously enhanced. If the community chooses to have greater development and growth, a course of action to provide these services should be undertaken. If growth is not



desired by the local people, the action to be taken is also within control of the people of Lake Waccamaw. There is a definite relationship between the needs required by a population increase in a community. Municipal operating costs, for example, are sure to increase with a larger resident population.

The town's population growth could be estimated to reach up to 4,000 persons within the next 20 years. This unlikely until the town installs an adequate water and sewer system and upgrades other community facilities. Much of the potential growth depends upon the choices made by the town and its citizens. During the past four decades growth averaged 135 persons for every ten years. On this basis, the town will continue to increase at a decreasing rate. After this next twenty year period the town would only have 1,200 persons. Other lakeshore development could cause the fringe area population to grow much faster than the town. It is possible for the planning area to achieve a population of 2,200 within a 20 year period without any of the improvements that were suggested above.



## THE ECONOMY

The early economy of the Lake Waccamaw area was one that depended upon the forests. The naval stores industry, enhanced by the presence of the railroad, accelerated cutting of the dense swamp forest. Lumber companies were attracted to the area. Over the years there has been a shift in emphasis of the use of these forests. Originally "ton timber" was taken for ship building and shingles were brought from the Green Swamp by barge across Lake Waccamaw. Now forest holdings provide saw lumber and pulpwood as the major products. The local degree of interest in forestry and forest products is evidenced today in the amount of land area held by lumber and forest products companies. The Georgia-Pacific Corporation owns a contiguous block of 20,000 acres to the south of the lake and the Riegal Paper Company owns 140,000 acres to the east. To the northeast along Big Creek, International Paper Company owns several hundred acres.

One of the oldest industries in the area, dating from 1886, is the Council Tool Company located at Wananish which is simply a post office address in Lake Waccamaw. This company manufactures edged tools such as axes, bush hooks, ditch bank blades, and post hole diggers. Many of the implements made by the Council Tool Company are used in logging and forestry. It sells its product through wholesale hardware and industrial supply houses in approximately twenty eastern and southern states. In addition to manufacturing tools, it produces substantial quantities of closed die drop forged parts.

No other industry has been established in the immediate Lake Waccamaw area. The sparse population is perhaps one reason; the lack of raw materials (other than lumber) or maybe lack of initiative are perhaps other reasons. There are wood related industries at Bolton, Hallsboro, and Delco.

The local economy has progressed through three stages or sources of support. Earliest, as indicated above, was the forest product economy. After railroads were established this locale became a summer tourist location attracting people from all over the state. Cottages, a dancing pavilion, beaches, and boys camps were the focus of activity in the first quarter of this century. Some of this resort activity has carried over. People are now building homes on the lakefront rather than cottages. Some of the businesses that were earlier supported by the tourist population are now becoming well-worn and less used while two new business establishments (an ABC store and Hill's Supermarket) that cater to the present day needs, seem to be thriving.

The agricultural economy that pervades the remainder of the county is a part of the Lake Waccamaw Planning Area. Tobacco is the major income crop in the county followed by forest products. Data for 1965 estimates total county agricultural income at \$45 million of which income from tobacco was \$20.3 million and \$5.3 million from forests. In the areas to the north and west of the lake, the following agricultural products are evidenced: tobacco, pecans, corn, hogs, cattle.

The residents of Lake Waccamaw are not dependent upon their own community. The survey conducted during March magnified this



fact. Questions asked the local residents where they bought their groceries and clothes, did their banking, and sought aid of a doctor and dentist. Although the town has a supermarket and a smaller grocery store, nearly half of those who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they purchased groceries in Whiteville as well as at the local market places. Reflecting the fact that many residents work in and around Whiteville, this can be expected to continue until more residents are locally employed. Banking services are sought both at the Lake and in Whiteville. Again, people who work in Whiteville also have their bank accounts there. Several families have accounts in both towns.

Likewise, the pull of Whiteville is presented in responses to the purchase of clothing. Lake Waccamaw has no facilities which compete. Wilmington was mentioned often -- probably because of the larger choice and variety of clothing offered in the largest town in eastern North Carolina.

One of the most mentioned needs of the community related to the lack of a local doctor and drugstore. For example, the nearest doctor's office and pharmacy is 11 miles away in Whiteville. Residents also sought medical services in Wilmington, Chadbourn, Lumberton, and Fayetteville. With the access from the lake to these towns, this is not a critical problem but rather a convenience which is not locally available.

All small towns are a part of a larger trade area for some goods and services. Lake Waccamaw is within Whiteville's trade area as Whiteville is within Wilmington's trade area and region of influence. In some respects the larger of the two is more attractive to local residents. It was found, for instance, that as many local families subscribe to the Wilmington Star as the Whiteville News Reporter. When dining out, Wilmington is the place just as often as Whiteville. An interesting fact is that Calabash, North Carolina, which has several seafood restaurants, was mentioned often, too, by Lake Waccamaw residents as their destination when eating out.

The pattern of spending in and dependency on other communities could be changed to a local orientation which would bring spending back to the local community and boost the town's economy. It would not hurt the local economy to remain a "bed-room community" if more services such as a doctor and drugstore could be brought to Lake Waccamaw to accommodate the permanent residences. The service facilities naturally would realize heavier business demand during the summer tourist season. Commercial facilities mentioned above would also be used and supported by the surrounding rural area as well as the town.

Events have progressed to the point where the Town of Lake Waccamaw faces a multiplicity of economic problems. Demands for services and urban problems are going to increase if and when the town grows. A thoughtful selection of growth and non-growth



alternatives should be considered. For several years the town has been attempting to find funds for the construction of a sewerage system. The lake is in danger of pollution from septic tanks which do not work correctly in most of the area's soils, especially when the lots are small and the water table is high. In recent years the situation has become more recognized, especially towards the end of the summer tourist season. The State Board of Health could post the lake as being detrimental to health. Closing the lake to swimming would ruin the appeal of the area as a tourist spot. Once a lake is posted in this manner, the image is set and the damage is done. Pollution is currently most noticeable along the shoreline where drainage channels empty into the lake.

Fishing at Lake Waccamaw is thus far unaffected by the partially polluted feeder streams. Today, there is less use of the lake as a fishing site because people now have more ocean beaches, lakes and reservoirs within easy access. Lake Waccamaw at one time was a mecca for sportsmen. The coastal towns are attracting more fishermen because they are developing facilities to accommodate the needs and activities. In comparison, Lake Waccamaw has failed to provide anything new and modern which would encourage lake use. Had these facilities been provided, this lake would have required its popularity. An attempt will soon be made by the State to concentrate game fish in Lake Waccamaw by using a series of brush shelters.<sup>1</sup> Because the lake is so large, focusing areas of good game fishing will encourage the return of fishermen to Lake Waccamaw.

The failure to encourage new facilities at Lake Waccamaw could be a result of the type of person who lives the year-round in Lake Waccamaw. He works out of town and he finds it more convenient to buy his goods out of town. He is not fully supporting local merchants. Could this basically be the fault of the town? Have local government and civic organizations not been promoting development of industry or other facilities which create local growth? Does the town want growth or do the local citizens feel it is more desirable for the community to preserve and enhance its character as a "bedroom" community?

Yearly, the costs of municipal administration and providing services to the community are increasing. Needs, such as a sewer system or street resurfacing, are becoming more expensive to provide. Although there is a substantial increase in expenses there is no strength in the economy of the community.

Several solutions to handle this dilemma are possible. Increasing the tax rate will not do a complete job -- and it is only a temporary solution before rates or assessed valuation again must be boosted to meet rising costs. Instead, the town

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<sup>1</sup> The Division of Inland Fisheries of the Wildlife Resources Commission intends to carry out this project.



needs to be supported by a firmer contributor to the community. A stronger base could be in the form of industry, intensive recreation development, or a State Park which would attract people to the community. The chance of attracting industry will be enhanced when municipal water and sewer systems are installed. The planned development of recreation facilities would be more in line with the potential of the Town of Lake Waccamaw and would permit the town to remain basically a residential community.

Another problem may soon come to the forefront. The development of residential areas may reach a point of total shoreline development; in other shoreline areas the swampy land may be too expensive to develop or may be curtailed by lack of a suitable sewage system. The time may come when people will be unwilling to build on anything but a shoreline property. Access to the water could be provided by public parkland and good subdivision design. Without access, building lots are harder to sell and the public will seek other recreation spots in other communities. The local economy will again suffer from lack of new investment and from removal of the town from the competitive market for housing sites and construction.

Currently underway is a county-wide water and sewer study which will determine the magnitude of utility needs in all areas of the county. This feasibility study will offer suggestions that will aid developers and the town to avoid areas of potential sewage and water collection and treatment problems in development.

In terms of access to other cities in the region, the future will see highway construction improvements. Plans are being formulated for the relocation of U. S. 74-76 between Charlotte and Wilmington. The new road will pass to the north of the existing route. Completion of this proposed facility will permit the town's residents to have better access to job opportunities elsewhere while the town can draw tourists and residents with greater ease because of the improved access.

The above problems and alternatives suggest how critical the upcoming years will be to the community's well-being. The decisions made by the Town Commissioners now will determine how well the challenge will be met. Indecision and inaction will not solve the problems of Lake Waccamaw. The problems will not go away. By doing nothing the complexity of the problem will multiply and force a greater hardship upon the community when its citizens decide they have had enough and attempt to correct the situation. In short, the town and citizens can either bid or pass. The opportunity is now before them.







# THE COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

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## INTRODUCTION

The Community Facilities Plan is an important part of the overall development program. This text presents an inventory of the existing levels of local services and discusses the apparent needs and deficiencies within the community. Accompanying the generalized analysis of municipal services are recommendations for consideration by the Town Officials which will hopefully generate solutions for some of the problems. This plan will help coordinate municipal expenditures for equipment, land and buildings.

The community facilities are, by definition, any of the service functions provided by the town, school district or county agencies. The facilities include a wide range of services such as fire and police protection, health care, educational, cultural, and utility needs. One of the primary purposes of this report is to provide the town commissioners and the interested citizens with specific recommendations for improving specific community facilities.

Each of these services have their demand for personnel, equipment, space and supporting finances; each facility can be expected to have periodic replacement needs. The responsible citizen can appreciate the need for a given public improvement if he has an understanding of what now exists in relation to what will be needed. In the same effort this text is providing a source of basic information about each of the community facilities for the convenience of town officials and other interested citizens and a plan to recognize and overcome some of the needs and deficiencies of the community operations.

Three factors can explain why demands on community facilities are created. First, the town has an accumulated backlog of projects which have been postponed during the past decade(s). Second, modernization or wear may demand new facilities. Finally, there is an expansion demand -- a demand which requires construction of facilities necessary to accommodate the expected growth in population and to bring the level of services up to an acceptable minimum.

Because the Town of Lake Waccamaw is small, both in terms of the size of its resident population (933) and the annual operating budget, it is important that the town attempt to set its goals at a level which is financially feasible and can be reasonably achieved. The fact must be considered when the community is raising money for improved facilities, that more than one-third of the developed land within the Lake Waccamaw town limits is owned by institutions, churches, etc., which are non-taxable. The town must try to develop its services for the



benefit of the majority of its inhabitants. For the larger goals and projects, the town should develop its facilities so as to serve the county and regional population use during their summer recreation outings at the lake. Through this method, the criteria for financial assistance are more likely to be met and funds more likely to be granted by outside agencies for developmental projects. The larger seasonal population base used to state needs should be more meaningful in considering large projects such as a major recreation facility or traffic circulation plans. The population projections depict the town's population in the summer tourist season as approaching from 2,900 to 6,000 during the twenty-year planning period. The population projection will be influenced by whether or not the town installs a sewage system and other developmental facilities which will encourage families to use or live in this community.



## THE FACILITIES

### Municipal Building

In 1959 local citizens supported a municipal bond issue of \$30,000 for the construction of a municipal building and the purchase of a fire truck. The municipal building houses the town hall and the fire and rescue squad equipment on a 24,000 square foot site. Included in the building are offices of the Town Clerk, police and a meeting room with a small kitchen.

Although office space appears to be adequate for the town business functions for the next twenty years, the fire and rescue squad have already outgrown their storage area. Needed improvements to the town's municipal building site include a designed off-street parking lot and an equipment shed which could be placed on the rear of the lot. Currently, the town's pickup and trash collection trucks have no shelter; they are just parked to the rear of the building. Because of its key location in the community, a concentrated effort needs to be made to keep the municipal building and property attractive. A site and building plan to increase facilities should be prepared immediately by an architect so that several of these related problems can be overcome. Implementation of such a plan appears to be one of the major priorities for the Town Board to consider.

### Fire and Rescue Squad

The Lake Waccamaw Fire and Rescue Squad operates as one unit. Rescue operations include drownings, auto accidents, train derailment or any disaster. Twenty members serve the community as volunteers. Nearly all squad members have completed a course in standard first aid procedures. Instruction on fire fighting procedures are regularly given to all members. Courses in safety, fire fighting and rescue procedures are held at the local fire station and at the Southeastern Community College near Whiteville. The North Carolina Insurance Commission provides some of the training program to local volunteers. As a training procedure, the Lake Waccamaw force will burn old buildings if the property owner requests removal of the structure.

The Lake Waccamaw Fire District is shown on the map on the opposite page. Mutual aid is provided to nearby communities upon request. This aid is most often offered on standby call only. The major piece of the Lake Waccamaw fire fighting equipment (the 1960 La France truck) is used strictly for in town use. All other equipment listed below is used for out of town calls. When a fire call is made from outside the town limits, a \$100 charge is levied.





FIRE DISTRICT MAP

Headquarters for the squad and equipment storage is in the same building as the town hall. The major equipment of the fire and rescue squad housed at the town hall-fire station includes the following:

- 1960 La France 750 gallon pumper fire truck
- 500 gallon per minute pumper Ford truck (vintage: 1950's) for fire fighting
- 500 gallon water tank truck -- homemade body on a Dodge frame -- for fire fighting
- 1963 Ford Van truck (Econoline) used for both fire and rescue work
- 1966 ambulance
- Boat with a 10 horsepower motor
- Two aqua lungs
- Generator for lights
- Resuscitator
- Civil Band radio -- part of the equipment in the Ford Econoline rescue wagon
- Gasoline pump for pumping water

All equipment is housed in a three bay segment of the municipal building. Within the near future, plans should be prepared to expand the fire and rescue squad storage facilities.



Three additional bays are now needed to house the fire trucks and ambulance in an adequate manner. A loss of precious time lapses when one vehicle must be moved to get out the required piece of equipment. There is space to the rear of the building on this site for additional bays whenever the new construction is feasible. The fire and rescue squad should submit their present and future needs to the Town Board for consideration and for general information. When the time comes for an addition, the fire and rescue squad members should help design their facilities for the most efficient use.

The National Bureau of Fire Underwriters have assigned two ratings to the Town of Lake Waccamaw which have been unchanged since May 1, 1960. The town currently has the best rating possible without a standard municipal water supply. The 9AA rating applies to the area within 500 feet of the drafting point of the lake. The 9A rating relates to the area where the fire and rescue squad is confined to whatever water supply can be carried on the truck. When the time comes, the town should submit engineering plans for a water system to the N.B.F.U. prior to installation so that the fire fighting requirements can be satisfied.

Financial assistance is awarded for the rescue operations by the County Commissioners (\$500 per year). Support for fire equipment is primarily from payment of fire call fees from out of town calls and from the annual allocation of the town budget. Yearly donations are made by local contributors to the fire and rescue squad.

Members of the Lake Waccamaw Fire and Rescue Squad are notified of a call by a siren located at the town hall. Members have to come to the station to learn where the fire is located. There is no apparent difficulty in getting men to respond to calls during the working day. Rescue aid is extended to Bolton and Hallsboro residents also. Because there is no other ambulance service in Lake Waccamaw, the rescue squad will answer all calls of lake residents. Outside calls must come through the chief before aid is sent. The rescue squad at Lake Waccamaw, the first in the county to be organized (1953), is certified by the State Health Department.

#### Police Protection

The nature of the community and the number of residents do not require a large police force. One person, however, cannot effectively police a town on his own. This is especially true when he must double his duties as the town clerk. Certainly, the town should find the needed funds to hire another full time policeman beginning in the 1969-70 fiscal year.



The greatest need for additional police help is during the summer months when the number of lake users is increased and traffic and parking creates more problems. The police work is overloaded on the hot summer weekends to the point where three law enforcement officers are sometimes needed. The Town Commissioners have hired an additional part time policeman to work weekends during the summer. This is expected to eliminate some of the enforcement problems which occurred during past summers.

The town has a 1964 Ford Police Interceptor and regular enforcement equipment. The town has a "police" radio in the municipal building and police car which is linked to the Columbus County Sheriff's Office and the N. C. State Highway Patrol. Two walkie-talkies are used for rescue, fire and police work. A new police car is to be purchased to replace the 1964 model this summer (1968). The Town of Lake Waccamaw has no jail facilities. Consequently, all criminal offenders are taken to the county jail in Whiteville. This arrangement will probably be suitable throughout the planning period.

Police protection offered by the town extends one mile beyond the town limits. This is nearly identical to the total "planning area".

#### Other Municipal Services

Once again, the size of the resident population places a severe limitation upon the amount and variety of services that can be offered to the community. The "other" municipal services are few. The sanitation segment of the annual budget refers to the trash collection that is provided on Monday and Friday of each week. The town employs three persons on these days. Additional brush and trash pick-ups are made on the first Wednesday of the month from May to September. This effort is an aid to the temporary residents who come to the lake to clean up their property prior to and during their annual stay.

For trash and garbage pickup the town uses their 1950 Ford truck which has a tilt bed. The curb pickup is provided only inside the town limits. No such service is provided in the fringe area. A 1955 town owned Chevrolet pickup truck is used for minor trash collection and/or street maintenance work. Within the next five years the town will need a new pickup truck and trash collection truck. This truck should be an enclosed packer type garbage truck. An alternative the town should consider is to contract garbage collection to a private firm.

All refuse, trash and garbage collected by the Town of Lake Waccamaw is dumped at open garbage dumps which are not approved sanitary landfills. The dump site, located just beyond the southwestern town limits on the Hallsboro Road west of Dupree Landing, provides a breeding place for flies, rats and insects. This site is leased from a paper company and maintained on a



contract basis. The site is of adequate size now but is not well located. Should the town experience its expected growth, the dump will not be of adequate size. The town should now begin to contract garbage collection and disposal (by sanitary landfill method) with a private firm.

The town's street system consists primarily of state maintained routes so that the town has little need to actually construct roads. When necessary, the town contracts this work to a private company. Maintenance is often handled the same way for expensive repair work.

Throughout the community roads are narrow. The only exception is the recently widened Broadway Street. Right-of-way widths are unrecognized in the community. Although records are available in most cases the property owner more or less consents to let the road run in front of his land. Over the years many rights-of-way have been encroached upon by these adjacent landowners. It may be that few persons actually realize that part of their yard could be reclaimed if road widening or developmental projects were undertaken by the town. If enough of this encroachment like this takes place, the town will not be able to widen its streets in the future. The problem will become practically and politically impossible over the years. The town should, therefore, explicitly guard against right-of-way encroachments. Public access to the beach in the vicinity of the Lakewood Subdivision is unused rights-of-way that could be developed by the town at any time.

Although most of the existing street system is adequate, several streets are unpaved and a couple of other roads need attention. Specific road work problems and alignments are to be discussed as part of the circulation system in the Land Development Plan. The Planning Board is currently studying the narrow Pecan Lane which presents a circulation problem, congestion, and a hazard to pedestrians. Recommendations from this Board will encourage the town's elected officials to undertake specific action on this problem. Other traffic related problems will be handled in this manner.

Street lights are being provided by the town. The Town Board has requested Carolina Power and Light Company to make a survey to determine how and where community lighting needs improvement. Carolina Power and Light will be making specific needs known to the community within the year. This is a recommendation for immediate improvements to the system. In the 1967-1968 town budget, the cost of improving the lighting system was increased due to an addition in the number of light poles. Future lighting projects should include upgrading the system and/or initial installation along developed areas of U. S. 74-76, in the vicinity of churches and residential areas, and along the shoreline drive. Lighting should be improved along the public beach area and curve in the road at Jones Hotel and at the



jog in the road at the Waccamaw Club. Greater candle power should replace the filament bulbs used along Broadway Street. The town should encourage Carolina Power and Light to provide the community with an overall long range plan for a lighting system.

Along some areas of the main road around the lake, sidewalks are needed as a separation for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Currently, there are no sidewalks inside the town limits. The scattered development, even along the lakefront, would not make a continuous sidewalk feasible. This is an improvement project which is of less importance to the community when related to other suggested community improvements.

#### Drainage

One of the major problems of liveability in this area reflects the soil and drainage conditions. Some of the sanitary problems could be improved through a local effort to clean up drainage channels in the older parts of town north of the lake-shore. Many of these channels are clogged up with limbs, branches and heavy vegetative growth. The drainage channels would serve their function if they were freed from their many obstructions. Additional new channels, if strategically placed, would provide more buildable lots and alleviate some of the health and sanitation problems.

Flooding drainage channels currently cause damage to homes in the new Lakewood Subdivision on the east side of town. The Cove Development is threatened by floods in Cove Swamp. Friar Swamp east of town has flooding also.

Realizing that this problem is very important, the Town Board has a committee appointed to study drainage problems. The committee will be forwarding recommendations from their study to the Town Board for specific action this year (1968). Two areas likely to be given a high priority for improvement are Bingham Lane and Lakewood Subdivision. The town will be using its currently available Powell Bill funds for these drainage improvements.

#### Water and Sewer

Of major concern to the Town Commissioners of Lake Waccamaw for several years has been the lack of municipal water and sewerage systems. The water supply is of good quality and volume that should meet future needs. The source of all potable water now consumed in the area is from the many artesian wells. The quality of this water is being threatened because of the many small lots upon which the resident has his house, well, and septic tank. For this reason, a municipal water system would be desirable before a problem of water contamination becomes acute. Providing sewage collection, however, may lessen this problem so



that it is of little consequence. The construction of a public water system does not appear to be<sup>1</sup> nearly as important as the construction of a sewerage system.

The town should recognize that many small towns get additional revenues, in fact "make money", from operating a water system for the community. Nearly all communities have municipal systems; however, very few towns the size of Lake Waccamaw (in terms of population) are spread out over such a linear distance. Indeed, this gives a unique character to the local problem which reduces the feasibility of this financially large undertaking.

At the same time, the lack of a municipal sewerage system is creating local sanitation problems. Several natural factors, enumerated in the Land Use Survey report, all work against a complete system. These features are the flat topography, poor soils for septic tank filter fields, a high water table and poor drainage characteristics.

Examining the problem of septic tank users in this area, it is first noted that the best soils in the entire planning area have "moderate" limitations when used for septic tank filter fields. To make matters worse, areas of this soil classification cannot be found along the lakefront where development is the most dense. This association of most suitable soils is found northwest of the lake and Cove Swamp. The remaining soils have severe limitations to septic tank use. Part of the soils problem is related to the high water table and saturated to super saturated soils. Even though these soil conditions make the use of septic tanks partially ineffective, no other type of treatment has been attempted. Septic tanks and the traditional "out house" are used exclusively in this entire section of Columbus County.

Due to many septic tanks that are not functioning properly as a result of soil conditions, high water table, inadequate lot size, etc., a potential hazard has been created to those who participate in body contact water recreation. With continued growth and development or if the existing systems continue to fail, the hazard of sewage pollution in the lake may become so great that it will be necessary for the Columbus County Board of Health to inform the public of such hazard and recommend that the lake not be used for swimming purposes. This would be a serious economic loss to the town and county.

The idea of having ubiquitous sewerage collection system for developed areas around the lake is very desirable even though it

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<sup>1</sup> Information supplied by Mr. C. C. Edwards, Registered Sanitarian with the Columbus County Health Department, Whiteville, North Carolina.



presently is wishful thinking.<sup>1</sup> A complete town system definitely would not stop the lake from receiving polluted and contaminated waters. The above paragraph has suggested that the upper reaches of the Lake Waccamaw drainage basin provides a great deal of the sanitation problems linked with the lake. A complete town system would, however, alleviate many of the local problems that are currently retarding development.

The many considerations involved with providing sewerage service are all expensive. The most desirable sewage collection system is compact and operated on the gravity flow system principle. In Lake Waccamaw's case, gravity flow would not be possible because of numerous drainage channels emptying into the lake. A pump station would have to be installed every few hundred feet. The collection system would be confined to very few feeder lines and one trunk line following the lakeshore. If all shoreline development were served, this line would total at least eight miles. Because development is intermittent, an unusual amount of this trunk line would run past vacant land. Also, on one side of the proposed line location would be the undeveloped shoreline and on the other would be a mixture of permanent and seasonal residential dwellings. Quite a bit of the shoreline footage is privately owned but undeveloped.

Health officials have suggested that a treatment plant of any proposed system should be located southwest of the town and lake. By following this directive, the treated effluent can be let into the Waccamaw River instead of the lake. This general location likewise does much to increase the cost of the treatment system. The cost would rise because of the extensive footage of large-sized pipe from developed areas to the treatment plant and of the outfall line from the plant to the river.

The original cost for a sewerage system was \$400,000.<sup>2</sup> Later more detailed surveys placed the price tag at \$550,000. The community went ahead and passed a \$345,000 bond issue to cover their cost of the system. In the meantime, the Farmer's Home Administration encouraged simultaneous inclusion of both a water and sewer system. This boosted the projected total project cost to \$770,000. Within the past year, the town applied to the Farmer's Home Administration for financial assistance on this project. The application might be turned down because of several factors: communities of greater need are given priority, an overall lack

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, the high cost of the complete system is discouraging. Henry Von Oesen and Associates act as consultant engineers for the Town of Lake Waccamaw. Offices are in Wilmington, North Carolina.

<sup>2</sup> Cost figures were estimates provided by Henry Von Oesen and Associates after they did the engineering studies for the town.



of funds due to the Federal budget allocations and the war in Vietnam, and the small population density. It is possible that this application will be directed to another agency for consideration. The large amount of funds requested may divert available Federal monies to several other communities that have similar needs but which require smaller grants.

While such a water and sewer project will require a large amount of outside money, the town should continue to seek Federal assistance. The lack of a public sewerage system is definitely one of the most urgent needs for the Town of Lake Waccamaw. It is suggested that sewage collection and treatment be given a high priority on the town's list of improvements. At the same time, the town should seek other courses of action to develop the community. The community might wisely divert action and energies into applying for only a sewerage system or into developing their greatest resource -- day use recreation. Developing recreation related facilities is more in line with what the community can afford to do immediately. The community-wide water and sewer system appears to be in the distant future. Perhaps the community should attempt to become a demonstration area for a new method of individual home unit treatment. This approach has yet to be introduced and considered by the community.

The county-wide water and sewer study is not expected to be in sufficient depth to provide any new solutions to these problems. Preliminary information suggests that the same system proposed by the town's consulting engineers several years ago is again being used. This is the same system for which a Federal grant is under application.

### Recreation

The citizens of Lake Waccamaw have the lake as their primary resource. Past activity and development has been related to the lake and its shoreline. Because the precedent has been set and because there now is as much of a resource in the lake as there was many years ago, it is suggested that the Town Board take action which will encourage the development of the lake as a recreation resource.

Most persons consider Lake Waccamaw as having seen its day. The lake was a prime tourist spot in the first three decades of this century. People arrived by train, automobile, and carriage for an overnight stay or week long vacation. The families and individuals who used the lake came for nightlife as well as for swimming and fishing. The "big bands" of those days attracted many persons to the dance pavilions which were once a part of the local landscape.

Within the past three to four decades, access to the lake has been enhanced and the means of getting there improved. As a



result, the demand for overnight lodging began to diminish. After the beginning of World War II the lake received most of its use during the daylight hours. Distances and travel time have been reduced by better roads, faster automobiles and higher speed limits. People now can use this lake for day excursions and then return home since it is no longer necessary for people to come to the lake and stay overnight. Gradually, the fame and attraction to Lake Waccamaw has been diminished. Meanwhile, ocean beaches and many manmade and natural lakes have become more accessible to the population of the Carolinas and have increased in popularity. The variety of water activities available to the public and within easy driving distance has caused a shift in water oriented emphasis from the once popular Lake Waccamaw to beaches along the Atlantic.

Over the same period of years, few new recreational activities were presented to the public. Old forms of recreation, i.e., the dance pavilions, were not replaced with newer entertainment ideas. The community appeared to be resting on its laurels. There was no community-wide planning program or focus in development. Perhaps, too, a segment of the permanent residents did not care for the active recreational use of the lake and lakefront and, hence, did not encourage new entertainment ventures.

The present recreational facilities are these: one 9,000 acre lake, one public access, one softball field, one skating rink, individual boating and fishing, and one private beach open to public usage. From this enumeration, a fairly large dissertation could discuss each of several local recreation needs and problems. Briefly, the main problem has two facets. First of all, the nature of increased leisure time and current leisure time activities as related to the use of Lake Waccamaw could be the first topic. A second subject could evolve around a discussion of public access and group and family activity related to public recreational opportunities. The greatest opportunity for utilizing the potential resource of recreation at Lake Waccamaw lies in activities for day users.

The potential can be achieved by remodeling, adding or upgrading existing facilities, and planning new recreational ventures. The objectives must be within the financial means of the community. By no means should all recreation growth be a result of the Town Board's efforts. Certainly the local citizens are important in providing some recreational opportunities on their own initiative and in promoting large scale recreational projects which would be developed by public agencies (e.g., State Park) or by private developers (e.g., a golf course). Civic groups might provide recreational facilities or sponsor annual recreational or community events and/or recreation programs.

Suggesting development for day use recreation eliminates some of the development problems associated with overnight lodging and construction. With a sewerage system, recreation



development might be encouraged in the way of new motel construction and trailer camping parks. Without it, construction must be simplified. New recreation uses could not have overnight facilities because of the existing soil conditions for septic tank filter fields. Major improvement to existing recreation facilities would be desirable without having a sewerage system. More picnic tables, playground equipment and game areas for day users would not encourage construction for overnight facilities.

On the following pages are suggestions of various recreation activities which are needed or which need to be improved. Although many of the ideas are for seasonal use, year round applications of recreation facilities should be considered for use by the permanent population.

The water oriented recreation is more or less an unorganized, individual or family activity. Fishing, boating, water skiing, and swimming are activities which need improvement in the form of facilities and regulation. Fishing areas in the lake should be improved by a program of stocking the lake with game fish and providing manmade fish habitats. Some other lakes throughout the nation have achieved a better ecological habitat through this type of encouragement. The N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission and the U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, are two organizations which could aid the town, county, and/or state in upgrading the fish habitat of Lake Waccamaw. The Wildlife Commission has scheduled this project for Lake Waccamaw. Such a program would renew interest in the lake for fishermen who have found more favorable fishing success in other lakes. Attracting more fishermen to the lake would create a larger demand for specific goods and services locally.

Water shows on Lake Waccamaw are a potential source of recreation that have not been explored by local residents. It is surprising that on a 9,000 acre lake there are no organized ski clubs, water skiing tournaments, water-ski shows, sailboat racing or hydroplane racing. An annual regatta, ski show or boat race could give the community a recreational identity that would exceed the borders of Columbus County.

Boating has become a more popular past time in recent years. During the same time span, little has been done in the community to provide better public access, launching ramps, and good mooring facilities. The town should undertake an effort to provide public access and a boat ramp in the southeast part of town.

An individual might be able to provide the public with boat and motor rental at the lake. This service might include boat rides, motor repair, a boat sales and service outlet, and paddle boat and rowboat rental. It is doubtful that a complete marina could be supported at this lake; however, lock and key rental boat storage and moorings might encourage a greater lake usage by persons who live within an hour or more of the lake. These persons



would find it more convenient to keep their boat at the lake rather than to haul it back and forth for each outing. The town should consider leasing a marina site that would provide some or all of the above services.

While the boat regulations and skiing regulations of the N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission apply to Lake Waccamaw, the town may wish to request time zoning of the water surface. This could limit use of the waters for skiing to specific daylight hours, for example, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Area zoning would remove the competition between the fishermen and skiers which may take place during some of the best fishing hours on the lake. The Town of Lake Waccamaw, the Division of State Parks and the Wildlife Resources Commission would undertake this project together.

Swimming opportunities at this state-owned lake are appallingly poor. The one privately owned beach that is open for public use has had no improvements for several years. Since there are no other public beaches, most of the non-residents are forced to use this swimming area. Part of the problem is related to ineffective use of the available acreage. A reorganization of access to and parking near the beach, addition of picnic areas, benches, public restrooms and dressing rooms, and shelters, regulation of eating areas and concession stand operations, a cleanup of the beach, swimming area and piers, and the marking off the swimming area are improvement items which would encourage greater use of this land and water area. A quality beach area and complimentary facilities will encourage use. The end result will be to provide residents of the region with a first class facility while at the same time to enhance business opportunities of the local merchants. The town should own such a public beach area with quality day use facilities.

In the future the town should encourage the relocation of the highway which runs parallel to this public beach. From the standpoint of safety, traffic movement and land use, this beach area would be more usable if the traffic flow was diverted behind the beach area of active use. (This is especially needed during the summer months). The relocation will be indicated on the town's adopted Thoroughfare Plan.

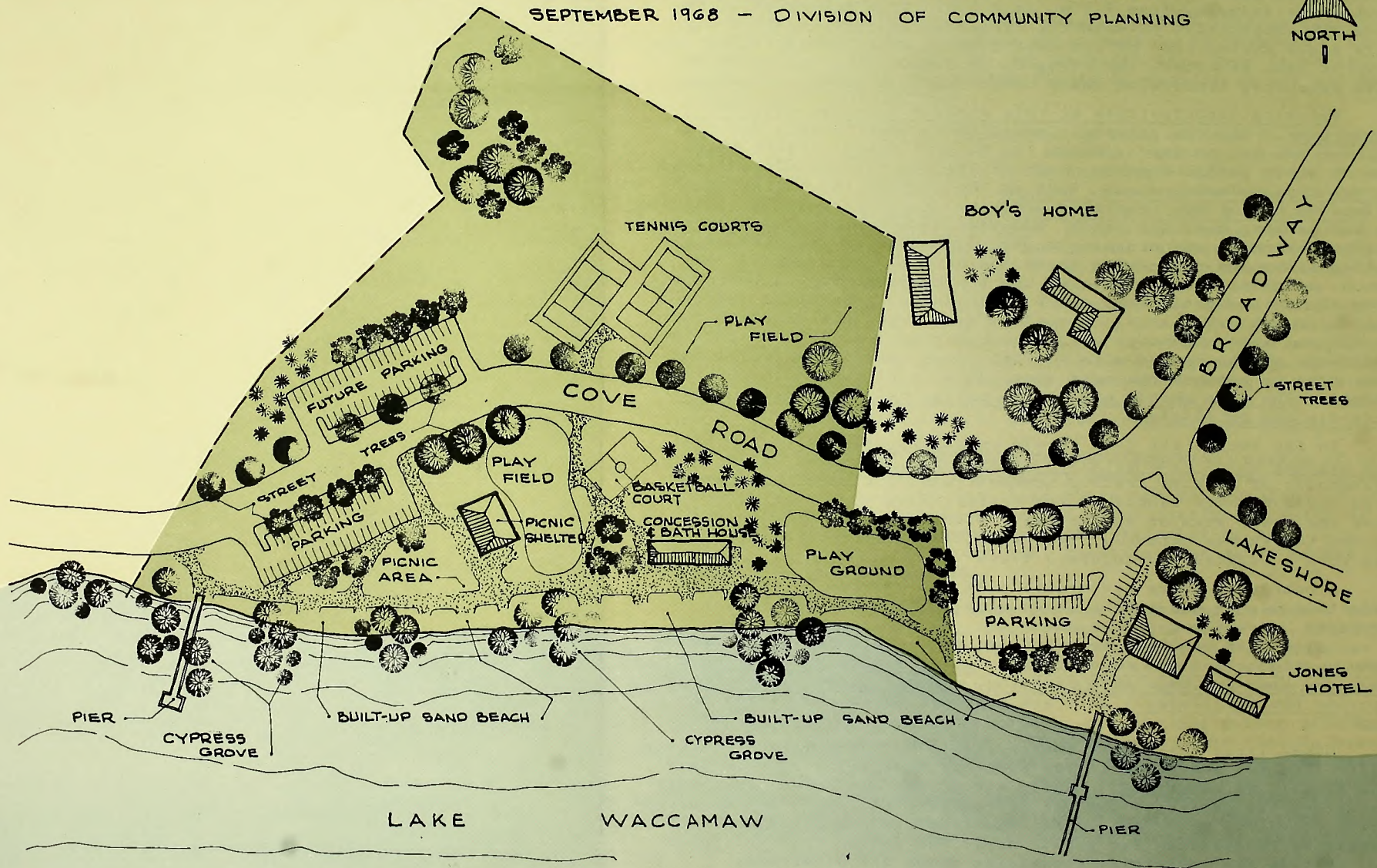
A couple of years ago a site plan was offered to make more effective use of the public beach area in front of the Weaver property. Nothing was done about it. As a part of this report, a new site plan has been prepared for this public use area taking into consideration the above needs. It is strongly recommended that the town purchase this property, convert it into a park and provide new facilities. This new proposal is on the following page.

Other large beachfront owners should be encouraged to develop their land for public use. The problem, however, is due to land use as well as ownership. Nearly all of the developed shoreline is in private ownership for use as residential land. Non-developed areas along the shore are either inaccessible presently or are too expensive to purchase for public use. The zoning ordinance does not provide for commercial recreation along the lakefront.



# PROPOSED LAKE SHORE RECREATION AREA

SEPTEMBER 1968 - DIVISION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING





Today, water is definitely the focus of outdoor recreation. People like water bodies as a place to swim and fish in, to boat on, to walk, picnic, or camp by and to just look at. Complete recreation complexes could be either State Recreation Areas or such well financed developmental projects as the newly opened Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, Playboy Club. These complexes rely upon a multiplicity of first class recreation activities. A systematized, synchronized approach to a recreation complex provides the best management of recreation developments. A greater variety of activities is available to a greater number of people. The complex appeals because it can attract so many individual recreational appetites. The State Parks in North Carolina do not provide the maximum facilities that many sister states provide. Perhaps State Recreation Areas would be better suited to the Lake Waccamaw area in that more flexibility in development could be assured.

The possibility of having a State Recreation Area on Lake Waccamaw at an initial discussion would appear to be relatively certain. Currently, the State owns no land except the small boat access area. The capability for a large natural park is enhanced because half of this 9,000 acre state-owned lake shoreline is wilderness. Secondly, the land area is not only available but suitable for a first class recreation development. Another factor is that the lake atmosphere and its surroundings are unique in terms of existing State Parks in North Carolina. Furthermore, the State of North Carolina has no State Park within 40 miles of this lake. A State Park here could compliment the closest existing part at Jones Lake approximately 40 miles away -- north of Elizabethtown. The land is available and the need for this type of facility is definite from all standpoints, especially from major considerations: land area available, need, location, presence of the state-owned lake.

If a recreation area were to be located on the south and southeast shore of the lake, the site would be ideal for a first class recreation complex. The shoreline could be developed into a swimming beach and picnic area. The acreage could also support a planned development which may include a group camp, horseback trails, tent camping, trailer camping, wilderness area, picnic areas, boat launching area, and marina services. This development could be the work of the Division of State Parks or a Recreational Development Commission. Access into and out of the area would be controlled as part of the overall development plan. Although this proposed complex is large, financing of the project could be partially achieved from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation on a 50 percent of the cost matching basis. The other 50 percent of the funds must come from state, county, and local funds, from gifts, donations and other contributions or fund raising events.

Such a large park would not be in the Town of Lake Waccamaw. Its attraction would fill the recreation needs of the town, county and region. The people attracted to the park would require services which could be supported in Lake Waccamaw and neighboring communities. A recreation complex, as mentioned above, would motivate



individuals to use this lake to a more intensive degree than has ever been the case. It is not to be considered a substitute for local and county needs, however. The suggested recreation area would in no way affect the lake waters or be a detriment to the Town of Lake Waccamaw. The park's presence on Lake Waccamaw would increase the potential for other activities in the town.

Along the lakefront at the southeastern part of town are four roads extending back from the lake. Each of these roads have a right-of-way that runs to the high water mark of the lake. There is an unusual potential for the town or a civic club to create overlooks of the lake or an area with one or two benches, perhaps a planting of azaleas or other flowering shrubs. Brush should be cut away so that an attractively landscaped area could result. Development of this nature is recommended at the beginning of Pine, Elm and Birch Streets. Shuffleboard courts should be installed as a part of this development or elsewhere in the community along the lakefront. This recreation facility would be oriented for use by the older segment of the population.

While the above suggestion is a form of passive recreation, one more suggested recreation need for active use should be presented. Within the town there is no tennis court. Because of the long playing season of this sport in this warm climate, the lack of this facility is a large gap in the recreation facilities. One or two courts could be prepared at a small cost. The courts should have a hard surface and have lights for night-time use. Related to this facility should be a black topped area with a basketball goal. The use of this hard surfaced area (tennis and basketball courts) could get double use as an area for holding dances and outdoor events. This project might be financed from current revenues or from a recreation tax assessment levied at property owners to pay for some of the recreation needs mentioned on previous pages. It is suggested that these individual improvements be placed as a part of whole recreation area.

### County Services

Health Facilities. The local community is somewhat handicapped for medical aid. There is no resident doctor or even a drugstore. There is not for the rescue squad -- who provide only emergency aid -- the community would have a very critical problem. Many residents expressed in the survey taken in March, 1968, the desire for having a local doctor and a drugstore. In the past attempts were made to attract a resident doctor. For the time being, the town's residents will have to travel to Whiteville, Chadbourne, Wilmington for these services. This distance is usually not a prohibitive factor; however, local medical service should be encouraged and improved immediately.

The county presently has one hospital. This building, located on Jefferson Street in Whiteville, was built in 1937. Additions to the hospital were undertaken in 1954, 1960, 1962, and 1965. The 146 bed facility is expected to be in need of an



additional 35 beds by 1970 along with an increased professional staff, expanded office and storage space.<sup>1</sup> Between 1970-1985 an additional need of 71 beds are projected. There are no plans for building branch hospitals in the county.

The Columbus County Health Department is located in a relatively new building on the Chadbourn Road near Whiteville. During the next few years there will be a need to increase staff size and possibly office space. Requirements and future needs are dependent upon the inauguration of new medical programs which increase the health department's work load.

Clinics are held by the Department at two locations in the county twice each month. The clinics at Riegelwood and Cerro Gordo are farther for lake residents than the trip to Whiteville.

Educational Facilities. The educational facilities in the Town of Lake Waccamaw have a uniqueness to them. In the first place, there is no public school system in town. Students attend the Hallsboro schools and Artesia School. Both of these schools are 3-4 miles west of the Lake Waccamaw corporate limits. As the schools attended by local children are a part of the county system, it is doubtful that a school building will be provided in this community during the 20 year planning period. Expansion to meet the needs is most likely on existing sites.

Within the Town of Lake Waccamaw, two institutions are providing educational instruction to children. The Boy's Home grade school children attend the public school held on that campus. They recently completed an educational unit consisting of a library and four classrooms. Each summer the Boy's Home conducts a special summer education program which consists of instruction in English and mathematics as well as some vocational and avocational training.<sup>2</sup> The high school boys attend Hallsboro High School during the regular school year. Summer sessions are attended by some of the boys at Hallsboro or Whiteville school.

In addition to Boy's Home is the educational pursuit of the Waccamaw Vocational School. This school presently has but a few students. The program is being supported by the Adventist Church. The "four R's" (reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and religion) are stressed in the teaching of these grade school aged children.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Whiteville, N. C., Community Facilities Plan, by the Division of Community Planning, for a more detailed discussion of health services, pages 55-56. Date of report: August, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Information obtained from a fact sheet distributed by Boy's Home.



The high school graduates from Lake Waccamaw and the adult population have the opportunity to continue their education within the county. The Southeastern Community College west of Whiteville on the Chadbourn Road provides a wide range of subject matter.

Library Facilities. The Columbus County Library System has base operations from a small brick building on the Chadbourn highway west of Whiteville. An expansion program on this site is to be undertaken soon. The system has 30,000 volumes.

Bookmobile service is extended throughout the county with approximately 75 different stops during each month. The Lake Waccamaw residents can obtain local service every fourth Thursday when the bookmobile makes its stop from 9:30-11:00 a.m. at the Waccamaw Railroad depot. The county library system would provide more service more often if interest were shown by area residents.

In addition to the county system, Whiteville has opened a new library (located east on the street south of the post office). More lake residents are using this smaller facility (in terms of volumes) than the county library or its bookmobile services.

Interested persons might form a summer cinema club at the lake. This group could obtain films through the county library system and hold weekly outdoor film showings. This activity would give both adults and children additional social, recreational, and educational outlets at the lake.



## CONCLUSION

This discussion has brought up suggestions and solutions to the alleviation of some community service problems. It is financially impossible for Lake Waccamaw to undertake all of the projects immediately. It is not the purpose of this report to suggest that this is desirable. The inventory of facilities and services is the base to which additions must be made. A broadening of this base must occur over the future years. Some problems shall be attacked immediately; others should receive attention when demand approaches the need and ability to finance the project.

In some instances the Town Commissioners will have to take bold but necessary actions to instigate the development of certain facilities. To be sure, the financial burden will have to be passed on to the user, developer and/or owner as much as possible. At the same time, development of town projects must be on a priority and feasibility basis. The current budget is very low because of the tax base. In the future years this valuation should be substantially upgraded from the current 80¢ per \$100 valuation on property to provide some of the needed services and facilities. During the immediate future (as soon as 1968 or 1969) the Town Board should also consider a Recreation Bond Issue to provide some of the facilities that will help the community realize its recreation potential. Spending money for recreation and cleanup projects appears to be the best way for the Town of Lake Waccamaw to attract visitors to use the lake and the facilities and businesses of the community. This activity could encourage more internal growth which would eventually make the major community improvements more feasible.











